

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-9 are cancelled by this Response. Claims 10-32 are added by this Response, and are pending in this application. No new matter has been added.

The drawings were objected to by the Office Action to request addition of symbols or legends for blocks shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 has been amended in the attached Request to Enter Drawing Correction.

A new title was required by the Office Action to more clearly indicate the invention. The title has been amended to reflect the subject matter of the claims.

Claims 3 and 6 were objected to because of informalities in the claims. Since claims 3 and 6 were cancelled by this Response, the objection to claims 3 and 6 is considered moot.

35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Saito, U.S. Patent No. 5,838,834 (“Saito”). Applicant submits that Saito does not disclose the invention as claimed in new claims 10, 18, and 26, and their dependent claims 11-17, 19-25 and 29-32.

Saito discloses an image processing apparatus and method. The method includes a compression process where frequency converted data is stored to quantize the data, the quantized data is encoded and multistage quantization and coding is performed based on quantization error generated in the quantization. See Abstract. In the passages referenced by the Office Action, DCT coefficients are generated as part of the compression process. Col. 6, line 58-Col. 7, line 3. The DCT coefficients are quantized to obtain quantization components, and the quantization coefficients are

arranged from lower frequency components to higher frequency components obtained by zig-zag scanning. Col. 7, lines 4-12. In other embodiments, the quantization process may include quantizing the DCT coefficients, then quantizing the residual data from the initial quantization step. Col. 4, lines 32-37, and at least Figs. 1, 11, and 13. Saito does not disclose a method including:

inputting a raw image;
generating from the raw image, including employing a first quantizing step, a first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality level;
generating from the raw image, including employing a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step, a second compressed image data set which when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a second, higher quality level,

as recited in claim 10, for example. In particular, Saito does not include a process “employing a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step.” Saito generates compressed image data that includes multistage quantization, where each stage is dependent on the previous stage. See, for example, Fig 1. In the embodiment referenced by the Office Action, only one quantization is performed, and then the quantized coefficients are arranged for coding. Col. 7, lines 4-20. Since the feature of “a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step” is included in all of the independent claims, claims 10-32 are allowable over Saito.

Claims 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Saito in view of Yamagata, U.S. Patent No. 6,263,106 (“Yamagata”).

Yamagata discloses an image data compression device which enables a user of a still video camera to select image data that is inhibited from being compressed. Col. 1, lines 61-64. Yamagata does not disclose a process including “employing a second quantizing step independent of the first quantizing step,” as recited, for example, in claim 10. Thus, Yamagata does not overcome the deficiencies of Saito. Therefore,

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 10-32 are allowable over Saito in view of Yamagata.

Although Applicant does not agree with all characterizations in the Office Action of February 05, 2002, Applicant reserves those arguments for another time.

CONCLUSION

As all of the outstanding rejections have been traversed and all of the claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, the Applicant respectfully requests issuance of a Notice of Allowability.

If the undersigned attorney can assist in any matters regarding examination of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: May 4, 2002

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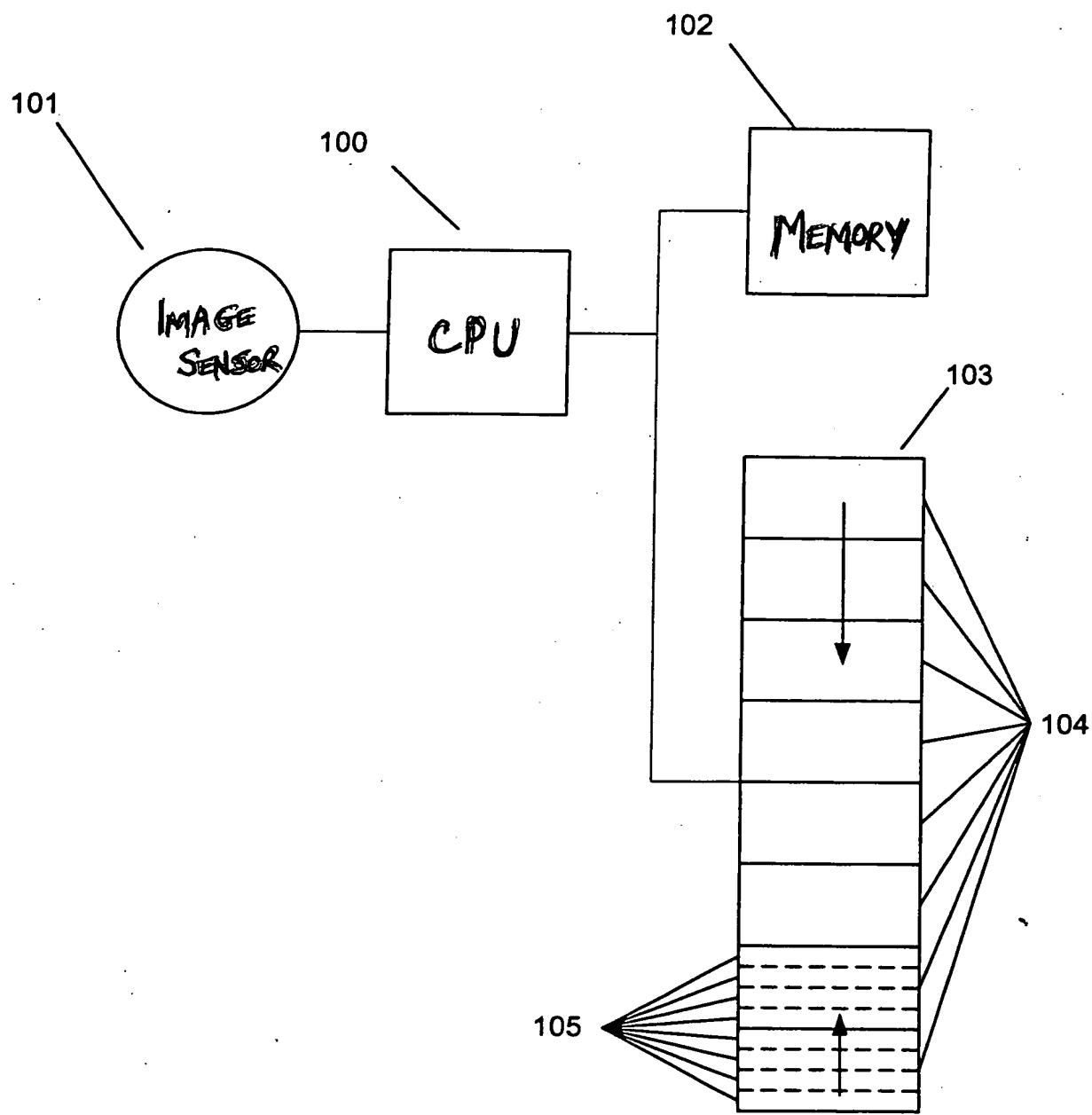


Fig 1